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ABSTRACT

Since the 1970s, enrollment at higher education/postsecondary institutions increased steadily; this rise helped reshape the higher education landscape. A higher proportion of high school graduates attended colleges and universities, and the institutions evolved and changed through a more diverse student body with shifting priorities in academic and career goals. Two-thirds of high school graduates entered college upon graduation in 1997 compared to less than half of all high school graduates in 1979. Enrollment at higher education institutions increased 30 percent between 1975-96, principally in public and private four-year colleges and public two-year colleges. Public and private four-year universities experienced relatively slow enrollment growth for the same period. Increased enrollment in postsecondary institutions mirrored population growth trends. The 10 states with the largest percentage increase in enrollments were located in the high growth areas of the Western and Southern United States. Increased access led to increased diversity. Between 1976-96, minority enrollments rose 114 percent. The proportion of institutions offering distance education increased from 33 to 44 percent; enrollment in distance education courses jumped 117 percent between 1994-95 and 1997-1998. More than half of adults with at least some college experience or with household incomes of $50,000 or more participated in continuing education. (YLB)

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WORKFORCE ECONOMICS

TRENDS

February 2000

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FEBRUARY 2000

NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF BUSINESS

WORKFORCE ECONOMICS TRENDS

THE BUSINESS VOICE ON WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION UNDERGOES GROWTH AND EVOLUTION

Since the 1970's, enrollment at higher education/postsecondary institutions has increased steadily, and this rise has helped reshape the higher education landscape. Not only are a higher proportion of high school graduates attending colleges and universities, but the institutions themselves are evolving and changing through a more diverse student body with shifting priorities in academic and career goals.

The demands of the workforce have made training and education a priority for an increasing number of people. Many of these people are located in areas of the country experiencing tremendous population and economic growth. Expansion of the higher education institutions in these regions has brought increased enrollment and diversity.

- Two-thirds of high school graduates entered college upon graduation in 1997. In 1979, less than half of all high school graduates moved directly onto college.
- Enrollment at higher education institutions has increased 30 percent between 1975 and 1996, principally in public and private 4-year colleges and public 2-year colleges. Public and private 4-year universities experienced relatively slow enrollment growth for the same period.
- Increased enrollment in postsecondary institutions mirrors population growth trends. The ten states with the largest percentage increase in enrollments are all located in the high growth areas of the western and the southern United States.
- Increased access has led to increased diversity. Between 1976 and 1996, minority enrollments rose 114 percent, increasing their representation from 16 percent to 25 percent. By 2050, minorities may account for 62 percent of higher education enrollment.
- The proportion of institutions offering distance education increased from 33 percent to 44 percent, and enrollment in distance education courses jumped 117 percent between 1994-95 and 1997-98.
- More than half of adults with at least some college experience or with household incomes of $50,000 or more participate in continuing education. Overall, 20 percent of people enrolled in sub-baccalaureate programs have already attained a degree.

Higher education is becoming more important to both workers and employers as skill requirements in the workplace increase. This is reflected in both the increases in the percentage of high school graduates attending college upon graduation and in overall enrollment at postsecondary institutions in recent years. More importantly, regional growth and technological advances have improved access to higher education for minorities and people seeking to pursue continuing education. The changes experienced in higher educational institutions in the past decade suggest even greater changes in access to and delivery of educational programs, as well as a dramatic jump in diversity among the student population.

Workforce Economics Trends is a compilation prepared by the Alliance of research profiling our nation's current and future workforce. The information --- statistics, facts and demographics --- highlighted is intended to help advance efforts to build a quality workforce.

Alliance members receive *Workforce Economics Trends* six times per year, bimonthly. Further information and analysis about the state of the American workforce are provided through the Alliance's newsletters --- *Work America*, *Workforce Economics* and our faxed bulletin *Legislative Update*.

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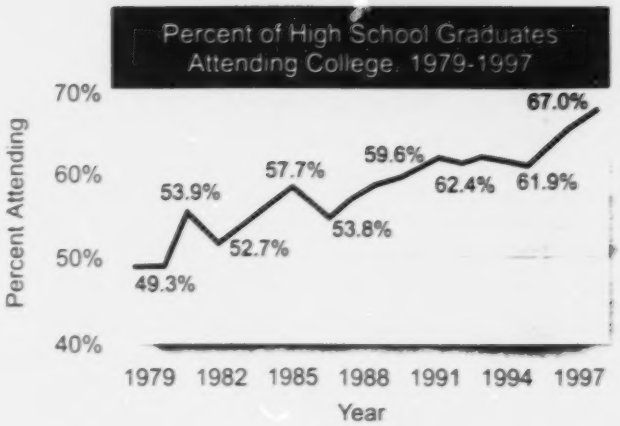
More High School Graduates are Choosing College...

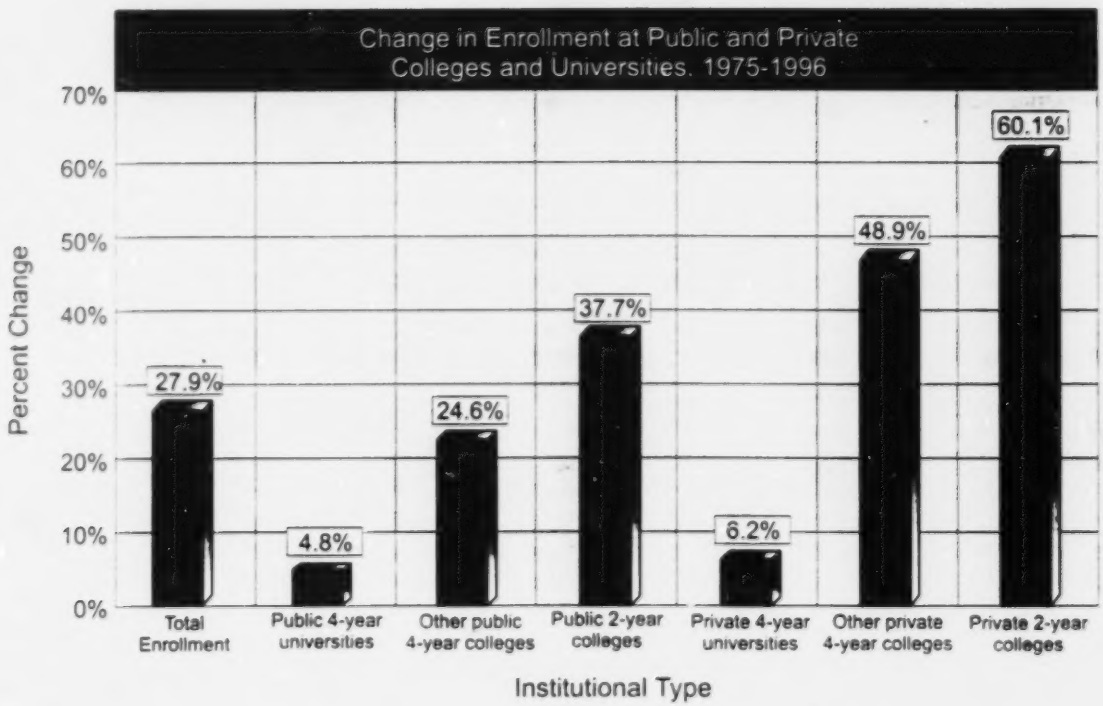
Prior to the 1970's the percent of high school graduates that went on to college remained relatively steady, hovering around 45 percent to 50 percent. Since 1979, this trend has shifted as more students pursue higher education. Presently two-thirds, 67 percent, of all high school graduates attend a postsecondary institution upon graduation. This trend is likely to continue given the increasing demands for a skilled workforce, the shrinking supply of qualified workers and the changing nature of the economy, which continues to shift towards a knowledge-based, high-skilled labor force and away from low-skilled manufacturing jobs.

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Digest of Education Statistics 1998.



Where are they going?...

As these students make their way through higher education, the paths they choose to take have altered the higher education landscape. Enrollment at public and private universities - generally doctoral-granting and research institutions - has remained relatively flat between 1975 and 1996, while enrollments at 4-year colleges, community colleges and 2-year private colleges have jumped. In fact, enrollment at all colleges and universities has increased nearly 30 percent during this time.



Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Digest of Education Statistics 1998.

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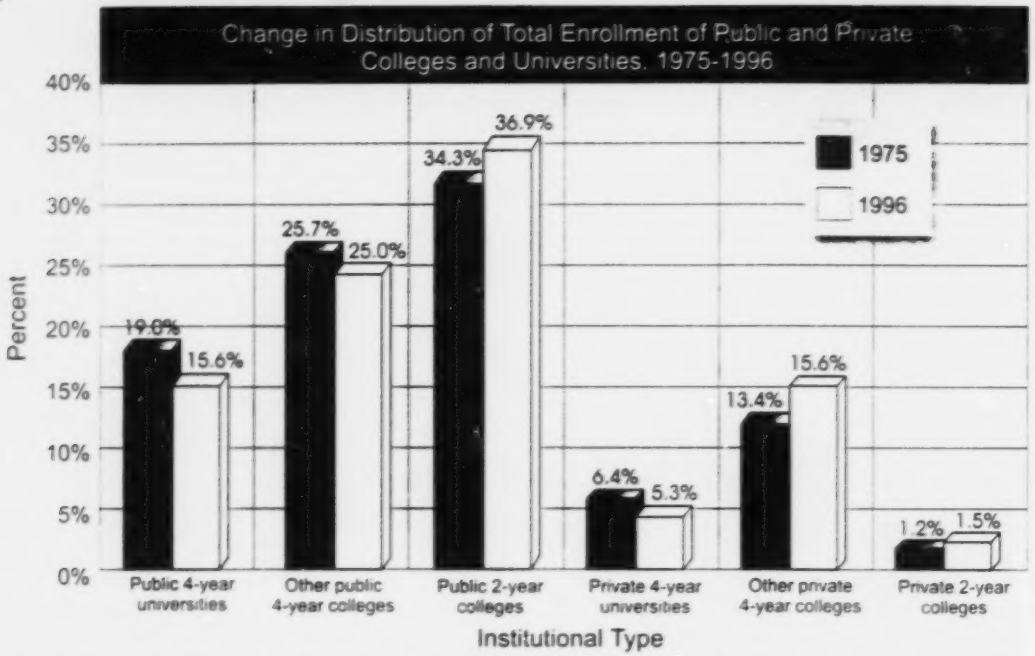
Colleges Gain Ground...

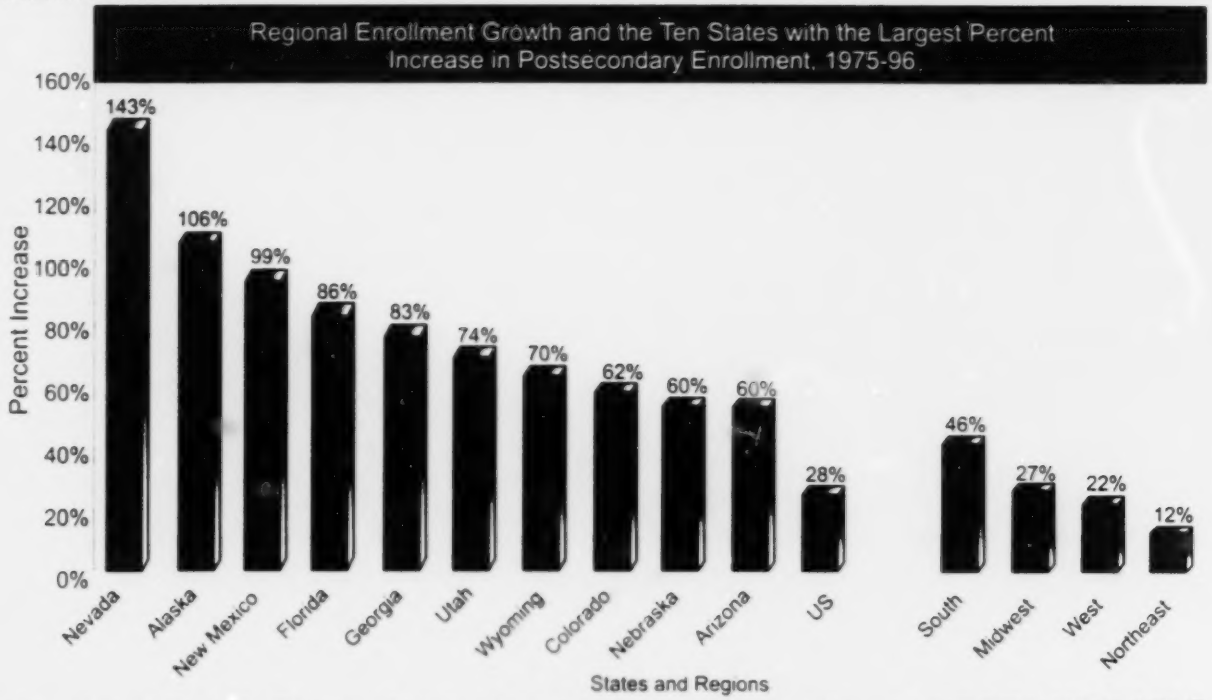
Proportionately, universities enrolled a smaller percentage of students attending postsecondary institutions in 1996 than they did in 1975.



Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Digest of Education Statistics 1998.

Population Growth and Enrollment...

The increase in enrollment at public 4-year colleges and 2-year colleges is a reflection of greater access due to population growth in certain areas of the country. Increased access has meant increased opportunity for people to pursue postsecondary training. Of the ten states with the largest percent increase in postsecondary enrollment between 1975 and 1996, all are in the West and South.



Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Digest of Education Statistics 1998.

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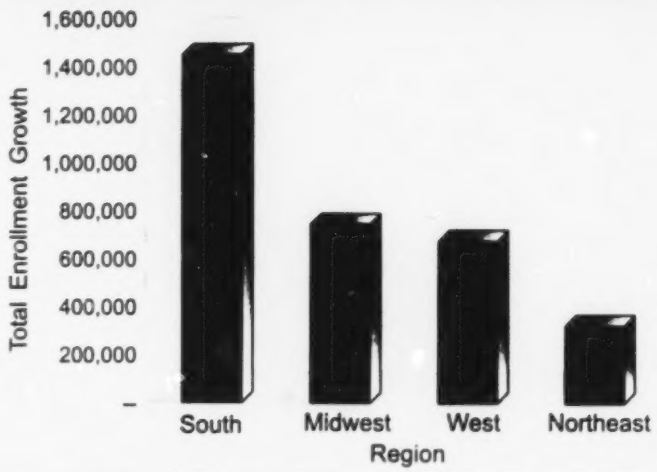
Postsecondary Institutions In the South Dominate Growth In Enrollment...

In terms of actual numbers, the postsecondary institutions in the South dominated the growth in enrollments, adding 1.4 million students between 1975 and 1996. By contrast, the densely populated Northeast added only about one-fifth as many students over the same period. This is due in part to the types of institutions found in these regions. The Northeast has a larger concentration of private universities that traditionally espouse tight admissions standards, charge higher tuition and limit enrollment growth, while the South and West contain more public 2-year and 4-year colleges that tend to have more open enrollment and lower tuition.

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Digest of Education Statistics 1998.

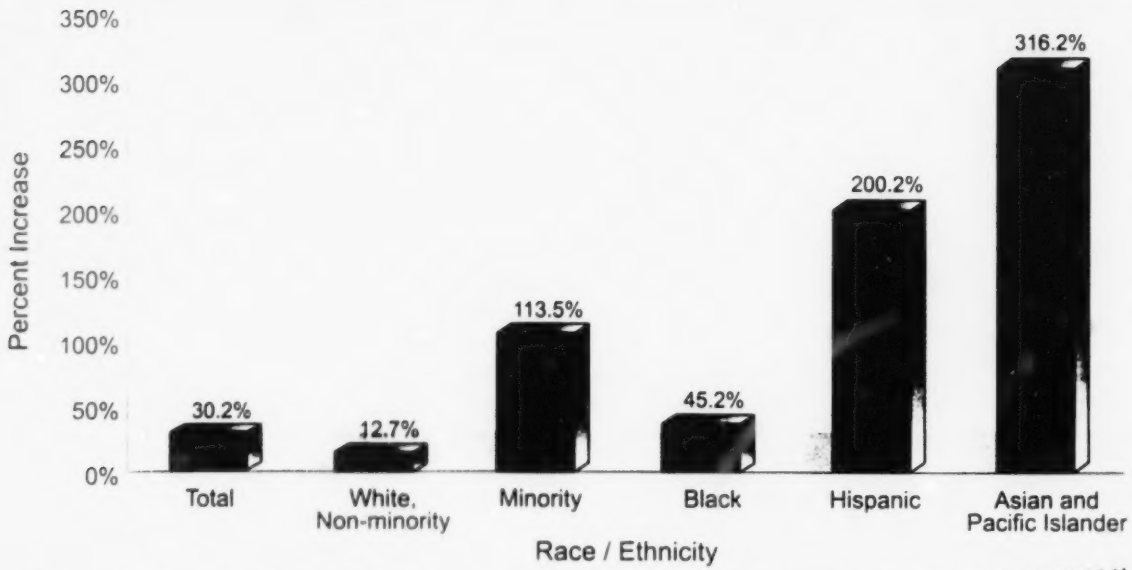
Growth in Total Postsecondary Enrollment by Geographic Region, 1975-1996



Minority Enrollments on the Rise...

Increased access has also meant increased diversity. Minorities are enrolling in college in greater numbers and accounting for a larger proportion of the postsecondary education population. Between 1976 and 1996, minority student enrollment increased 114 percent while overall enrollment rose 30 percent. Hispanics and Asian/Pacific Islanders experienced the largest changes in enrollment, increasing 200 percent and 316 percent respectively.

Percent Increase in Enrollment in Postsecondary Institutions by Race/Ethnicity, 1976-96



Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Digest of Education Statistics 1998.

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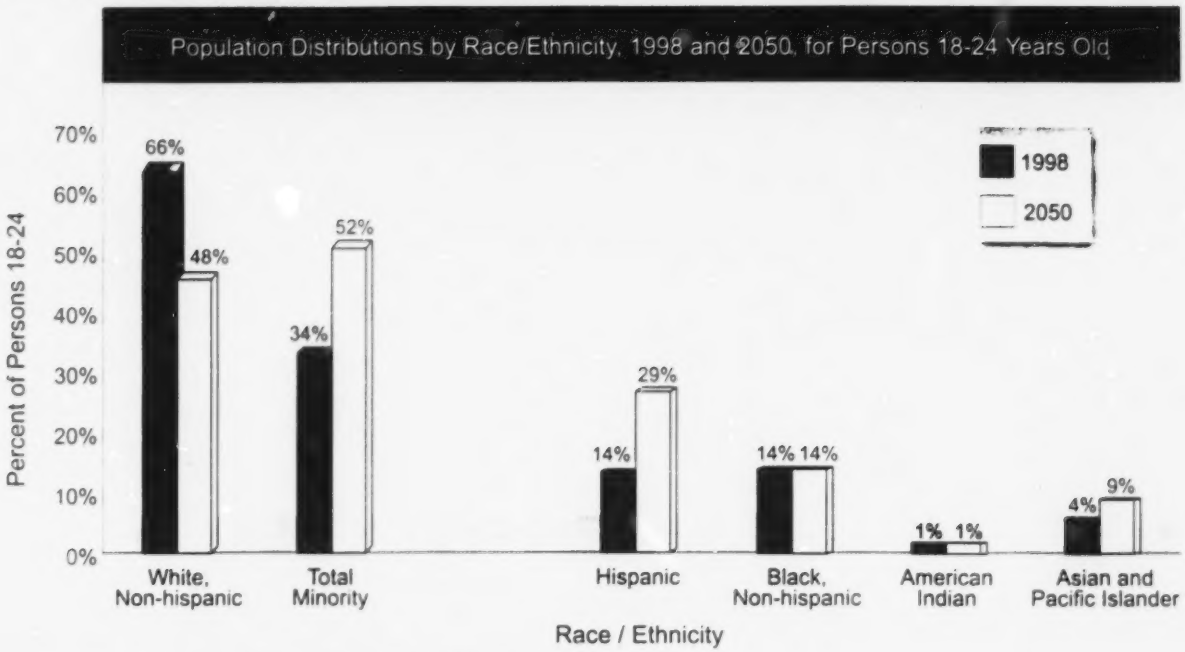
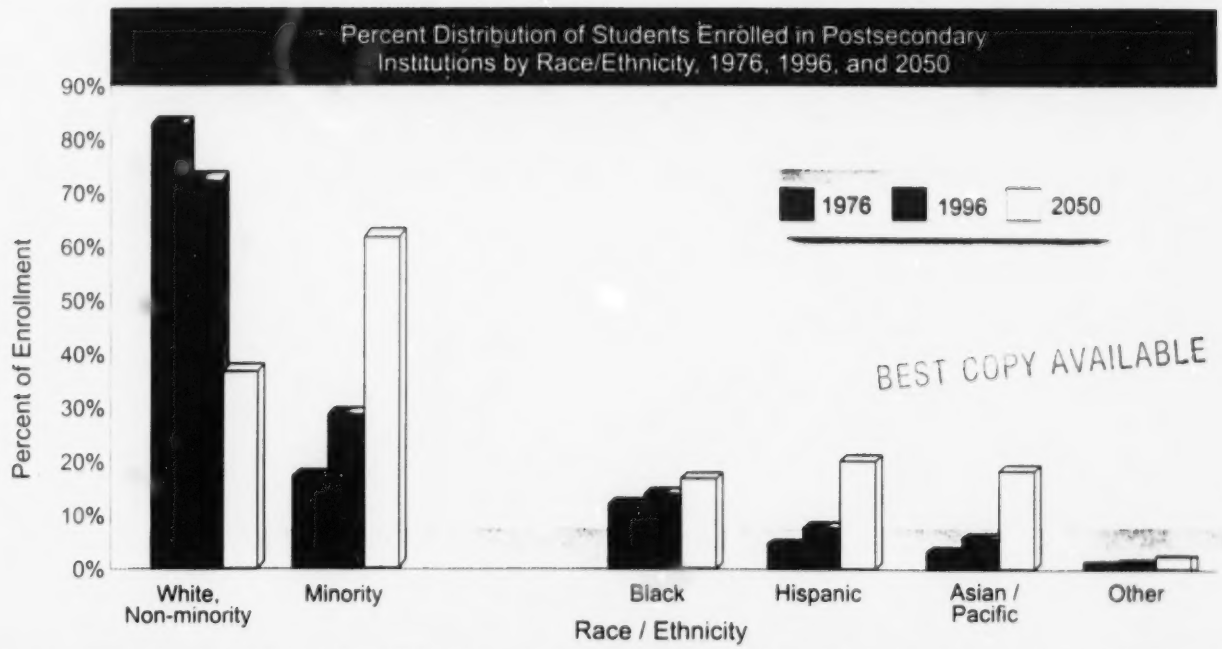
College Age Minorities Are Becoming a Majority...

Population projections suggest that within 50 to 60 years, minorities will account for nearly 50 percent of the US population and the majority of people between 18 and 24 years old.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, National Population Projections

Proportionately minorities accounted for more than one-quarter of postsecondary enrollment in 1996, compared to 16 percent in 1976. The increase in minority student enrollment points to increased access to higher education across all socioeconomic groups. The rate of recent enrollment growth by minority students combined with the steady projected increase in the minority population suggests that by 2050 minorities will likely account for the majority, 62 percent, of higher education enrollment.



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Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Digest of Education Statistics; U.S. Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the United States, 119th Edition and National Population Projections.

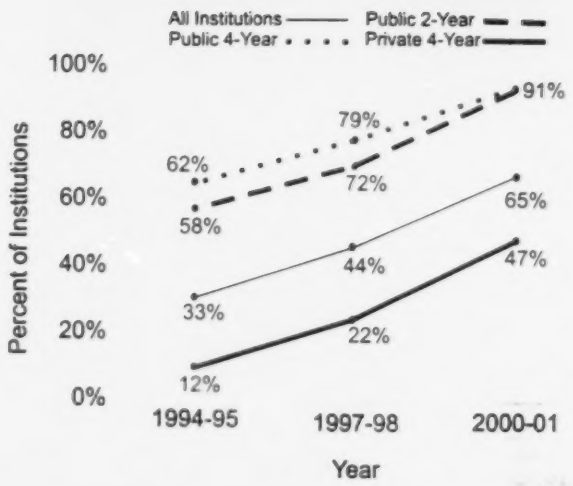
The Expanding Role of Distance Education...

While access to postsecondary enrollment has expanded, the method of education delivery has begun to undergo a technological evolution that will have an enormous effect on how postsecondary education is delivered. The rise of distance education at two-year and four-year institutions opens up educational possibilities to individuals, employers and postsecondary institutions alike.

Though distance education is not a new method of educational delivery, technology makes it far more practical and cost effective. As a result, the growth of distance education has been nothing short of dramatic. Between 1994-95 and 1997-98, the number of institutions offering distance education increased from 33 percent to 44 percent. Within three years, this is expected to increase again to nearly two-thirds of all postsecondary institutions, and 91 percent of public institutions.

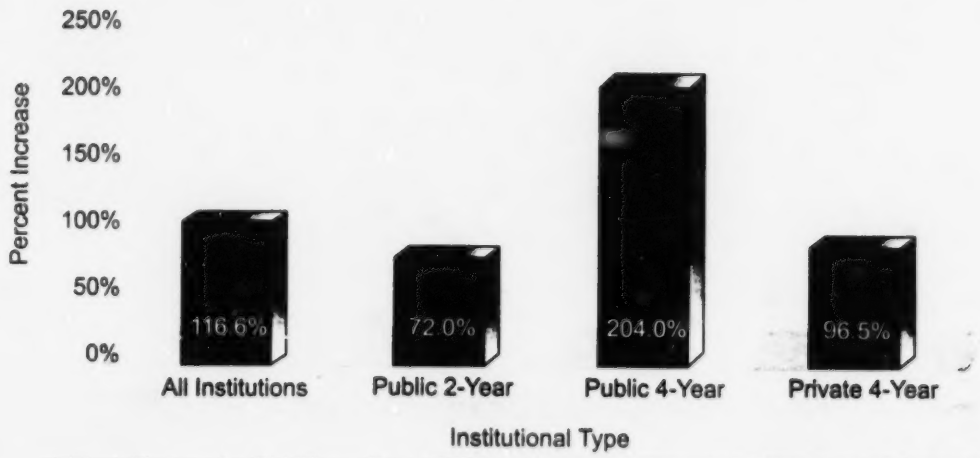
Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Distance Education at Postsecondary Institutions, 1997-98.

Growth in Percent of Colleges and Universities Offering Distance Education, By Institutional Type, 1994-95 to 2000-01



Enrollment in distance education is increasing at an even faster rate. Between 1994-95 and 1997-98 the number of students enrolling in distance education courses rose 117 percent, led by enrollments in public 4-year institutions, which increased at an astounding 204 percent.

Increase in Distance Education Enrollment at Colleges and Universities, 1994-95 to 1997-98



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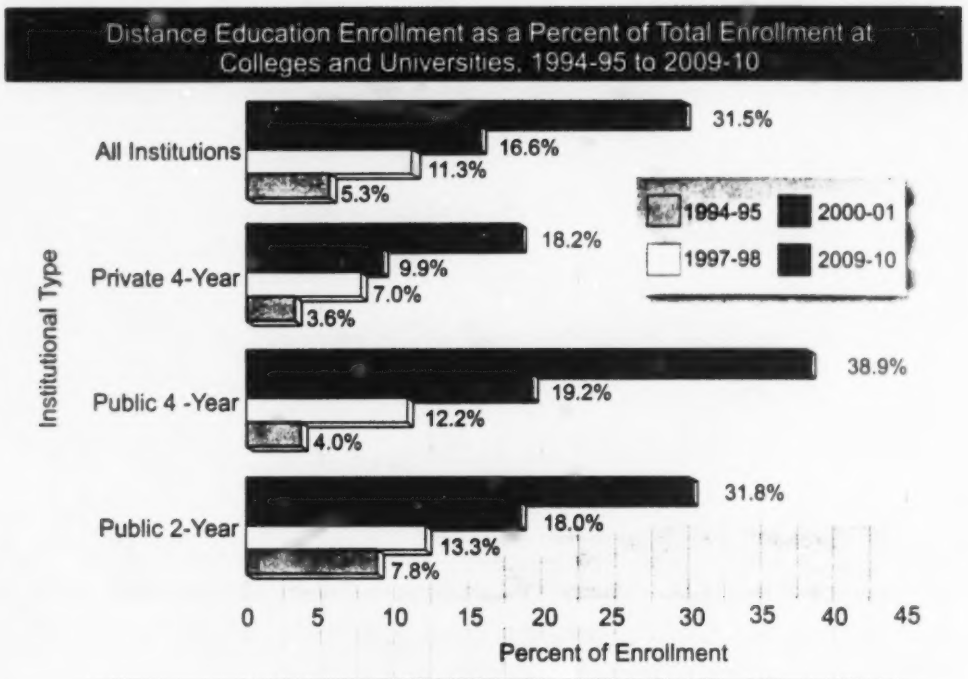
Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Distance Education at Postsecondary Institutions, 1997-98.

Distance Education Enrollments Are Accelerating...

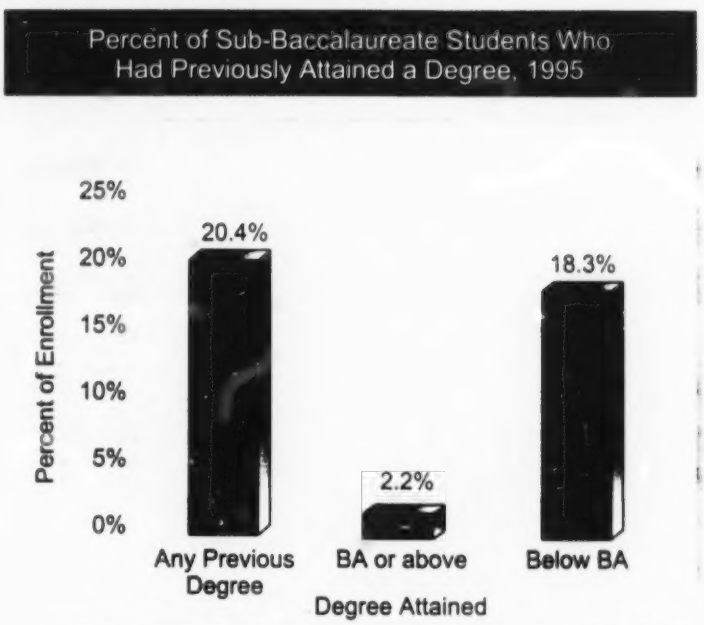
As a proportion of the overall enrollment in postsecondary institutions, distance education is rapidly becoming a major source of education delivery. The percentage of students enrolling in distance education at all postsecondary institutions more than doubled, from 5 percent to 11 percent, between 1994-95 and 1997-98. If distance education courses continue to add students at this rate, they will account for 17 percent of all postsecondary enrollments by 2000-01, and 32 percent by 2009-10. Nearly 40 percent of all students enrolled in public 4-year colleges will participate in distance education by 2009-10.



Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Distance Education at Postsecondary Institutions, 1997-98.

Continuing Education - Who's Participating?...

Continuing education and lifelong learning are becoming increasingly important in the workforce. As technologies and skill needs grow, so does the need for workers to seek additional training. In 1995, 20 percent of sub-baccalaureate students had already attained a degree.



Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Vocational Education in the United States: Toward the Year 2000.

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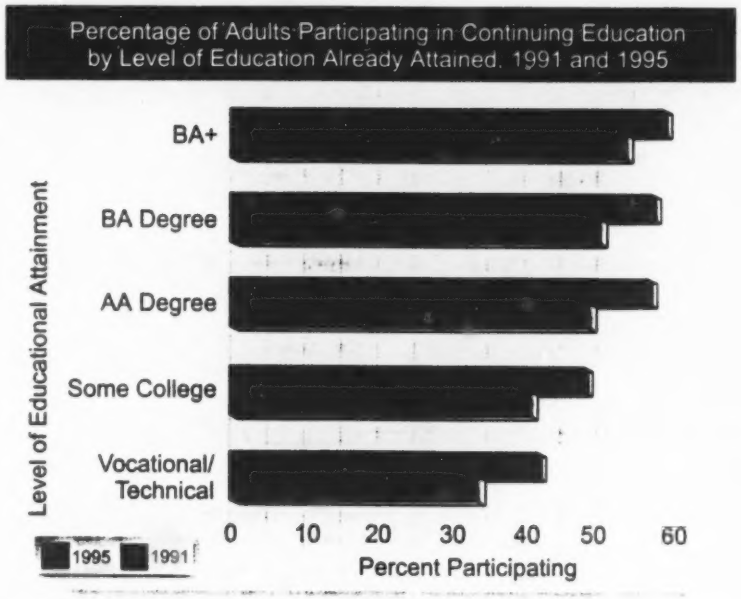
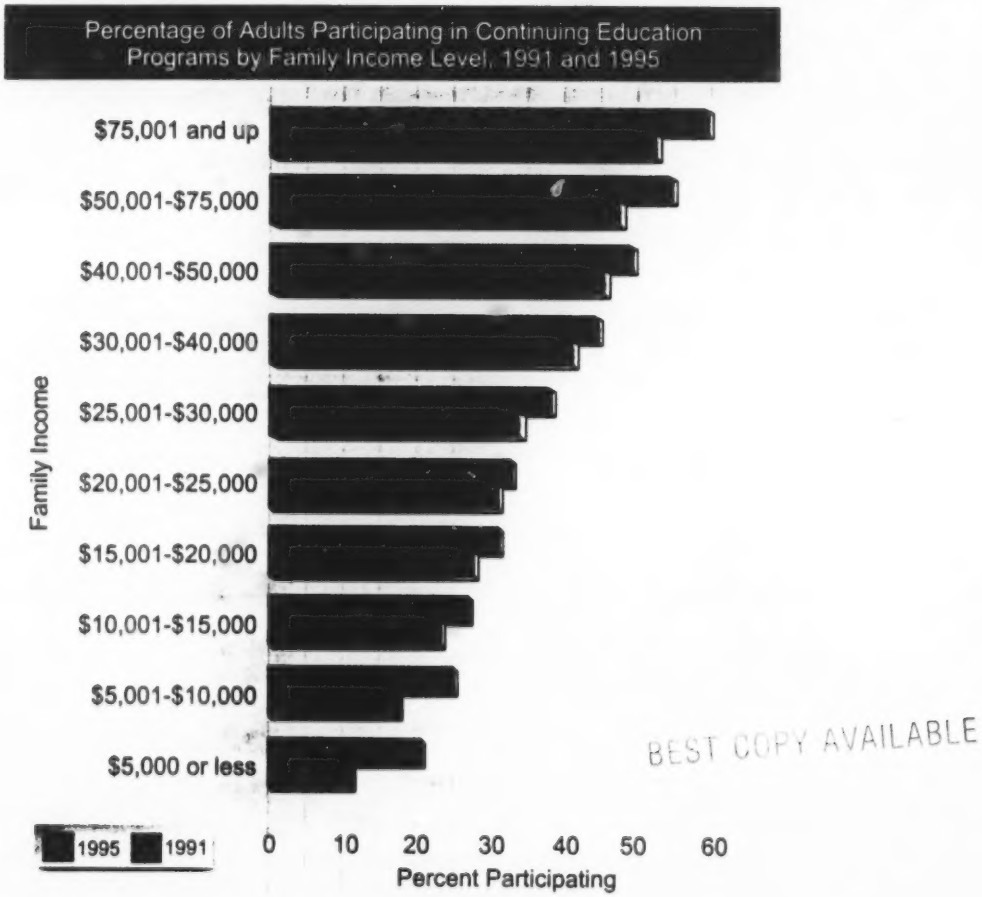
Education, Earnings and Lifelong Learning...

In just a 4-year period, between 1991 and 1995, the percent of the workforce participating in some form of adult education and training has increased for all educational and earnings levels. Interestingly, there is a direct relationship to both the level of education and the level of family income and the percentage of participants - that is to say, the higher the level of each, the more likely people are to seek additional training. Fifty percent of all adults with at least some college participated in continuing education in 1995.



Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Digest of Education Statistics 1998.

Similarly, more than half of workers with household incomes in excess of $50,000 in 1995 engaged in continuing education.



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Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Digest of Education Statistics 1998.